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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the origins of the entrance of black and white Southern women into the teaching profession after the Civil War focusing on their social, familial, and racial origins; marital and childbearing status; educational preparation; and how their lives converged or diverged due to the positions they occupied in their communities as members of a racially divided society. The paper cites two types of data: a random sample of teachers from the federal census of 1860, 1880, 1900, and 1910, and a wide variety of qualitative documents including diaries, letters, reminiscences, school reports, newspapers, and contemporary articles. Section 1 reviews the social, economic, and political changes that occurred between 1860 and 1910. Section 2 discusses Reconstruction and how a native Southern teaching force arose during this period. Section 3 explores whether teaching constituted downward mobility or upward opportunity for white women and describes how some teachers came from the "upper" classes and others from the "middling ranks." Section 4 considers black women and their entrance into teaching after the Civil War noting the presence of a high number of women of mixed racial background, and the importance of black teachers' commitment to racial uplift. Section 5 reflects on the findings' implications for Southern educational history. (Contains 52 references.) (JB)

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"Portraits in Black and White:
A Micro and Macro View of Southern Teachers
Before and After the Civil War"

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"Who Will Teach the Black Babies?" the headlines of both Northern and Southern newspapers queried in 1899 when white Southern clubwomen requested Georgia's Governor to make a plea for black education and educators during his 1899 Boston trip. According to these petitioners no "respectable" Southern white woman would teach black children, and black women were not qualified by their education, or character, to be in the classroom.[1]

The assertions of these white clubwomen were wrong. For, by 1910, if not 1900, the question of "Who will teach the black - or white - babies?" had already been resolved. The post-Civil War racially segregated classrooms of the South rapidly relied upon the labor of women to teach Southern children, a development which the Northern regions of the United States had undergone fifty years earlier. Scholars will continue to debate whether the feminization of the teaching force in the United States can be linked to urbanization or public school organization.[2] In this paper, I examine the origins of the entrance of black and white

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[1]Lucy C. Laney, "The Burden of the Educated Colored Woman" Southern Workman (Sept. 1899), 341-345.

[2]Myra Strober and David Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage?: A Report on Research on Schools,"Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 5 (Spring 1980, No.3), 494-503; David B. Tyack and Myra H. Strober, "Jobs and Gender: A History of the Structuring of Educational Employment by Sex," in Patricia A. Schmuck et al, Educational Policy and Management: Sex Differentials (New York: Academic Press, 1981); Myra H. Strober and Audri Gordon Lanford, "The Feminization of Public School Teaching: Cross-Sectional Analysis, 1850-1880" Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 11 (Winter 1986), 212-235; and John L. Rury, "Who

Southern women into the teaching profession after the Civil War. Although I suggest that urban areas in the South, which contained the smallest population of late nineteenth century Southerners, showed feminization earlier than rural areas, the largely agricultural South changed dramatically from a male to a female teaching force during the fifty years after Appomattox. The Civil War remains a great watershed in American history. The war's impact upon education, and teachers, was no less significant in the South.

I focus upon teachers in this paper, rather than the equally compelling picture of public school development in the post-war South. Teachers represent an important thread in society linking home, community, and school. To the child sitting in the new classrooms of the post-war South, the teacher opened a window into formalized learning and literacy. In other cases, a teacher's severity, or ridicule, of a poor child's clothing or speech, may have closed off, literally or figuratively, the child's relationship to formal schooling. And what about the teachers themselves? And their roles in their communities?

Within the time constraints of this talk, I focus upon three aspects of Southern black and white teachers' lives: their social, familial and racial origins; marital and childbearing status; and educational preparation. I then compare and contrast how the lives of these teachers converged, or diverged because of the unique positions which they occupied in their communities as members of a racially divided society.

I utilized two types of data for my research. As the title of this paper, "Portraits in Black

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Became Teachers?: The Social Characteristics of Teachers in American History" in Donald Warren, ed. American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work (New York: MacMillan, 1989), 9-48.

and White: A Macro and Micro View of Southern teachers after the Civil War," suggests, on the one hand I rely upon sources that will illuminate characteristics of the typical Southern teacher after the war. For this macro view of teachers, I utilized a data set of ten thousand teachers randomly sampled from the federal censuses of the 1860, 1880, 1900, and 1910. This data was gathered at the Harvard Graduate School of Education under the direction of principal investigators Joel Perlmann, now at Princeton, and Bob Margo, of Vanderbilt. For those of you interested in the details of the sampling methods, and more information on this data, I have here copies of an article which appeared in Historical Methods describing the project.

Although census data can illuminate facets of teachers' lives that few other records can provide - such as race, parents' and siblings' occupations, wealth, and marital status, this data also possesses its limitations. The seasonal nature of teaching, particularly in the largely agricultural and rural South of the nineteenth century, the mobility of teachers, and the common practice of rural teachers combining teaching with other occupations such as farming, or the ministry, resulted in an under count of the actual number of men and women who may have taught, a phenomena which other scholars have found, and one that I roughly estimate at ten to fifteen per cent.[3] On the other hand, census data remains, in many cases, the only documents available to historians and while they possess limitations, offer invaluable statistical information that contextualizes the individual experiences of teachers' lives - enabling us to understand the typicality or atypicality of a teacher's experience.

The second source of information comprises a wide variety of qualitative documents

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[3]Kathleen Weiler, in her forthcoming study of teachers in California also found this difference between the published school reports or records and census records. Country Schoolwomen: Teaching in the California Countryside, 1850-1950. 1995 manuscript.

which enable me to speak about the micro or simply, more personal level of teachers lives. Primary sources including diaries, letters, reminiscences, school reports from black and white normal schools, newspapers and contemporary articles, individualize the stories of these women. Numbers can provide us with context, but qualitative data allows us to weave teachers' stories into the broader social and economic fabric of schooling and society. The portrait of black and white teachers which emerges from this investigation is multi-dimensional. Although many labored under difficult circumstances, they entered the South's schoolrooms from different vantage points, teaching represented for some a unique occupational opportunity as well as a position of leadership among their community. Other women turned to teaching because of financial misfortunes and only discovered pleasure in their craft after the stigma of working outside of the home had been overcome by themselves, and society. Through these portraits of black and white teachers - both macro and micro - I hope to illuminate the lived experiences of children and their teachers in the South's segregated classrooms after the Civil War.

I. Fifty Years of Change 1860-1910

First, a quick snapshot of the changes in the Southern teaching profession before and after the war, particularly in comparison to the Northern regions of the U.S.

In 1860, among the white population of the South only thirty-eight percent (38%) of all teachers were female. In urban areas which reflected a small portion of Southern Society, women occupied sixty five percent (65%) of the teaching positions.

In the North, three-quarters (76%) of all teachers were women by 1860. Even in rural areas of the North the profession was predominantly female on the eve of the Civil War (80% in urban, 75% rural). Western states were also far ahead of the South, 65% female. [Define

Western]

The number of black men or women who taught before the war was negligible, North or South, only one percent of the sampled teachers were black. No black teachers were found in the Western states.

Regarding marital status, among women teachers in 1860, only four percent (4%) of women in the North and eight percent (8%) of Western female teachers were married. The South's larger proportion of married women teachers, twelve percent (12%), is not due to a more enlightened attitude towards working women, but rather, I argue, it is due to the large number of private husband and wife owned academies in the antebellum South.[4] In fact, after the Civil War, as more women entered teaching, the numbers of married women teaching dropped in the South to only 2% in 1880, remaining at that proportion in 1910.

The average Southern teacher at the brink of the Civil War was a white thirty-year old man teaching in a rural school. Fifty years later, the age of the typical white teacher had not changed, but over three-quarters of all teachers were now women, almost 90% in the cities of the South, and black men and women, who once comprised less than one percent of the teaching profession, now numbered more than one-quarter (27%) of all urban teachers in the South and thirteen percent (13%) of rural teachers. The portrait of the Southern teacher had indeed changed after the war, but how this change occurred forms the next section of my paper.

II. Reconstruction

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[4]Elbert Boogher, Secondary Education in Georgia, 1732-1858 (Philadelphia, 1933), and I.M.E. Blandin, History of Higher Education of Women in the South Prior to 1860 (New York: Neale Publishing, 1909))\.

During Reconstruction an estimated seven thousand Northern men and women, but mostly women, traveled South to teach the newly freed slaves. Many scholars have told the story of this philanthropic, religious, and educational crusade. Less known is how a native Southern teaching force arose after Reconstruction. Within a decade, only a few of the Northern "Soldiers of Light and Love", as historian Jacqueline Jones aptly named these teachers, remained in the South.

John Watson Alvord, Superintendent of Schools for the Freedmen's Bureau, reported to General Otis O. Howard after a three month tour of the South in 1865 that not only would white Southern persons soon be teaching freed blacks, but Southern black teachers would also staff the schools:

> The happy effect of mingling in one common and honorable employment persons from opposite sections of the country and also of different colors is apparent."[5]

The political, social, and economic upheaval of post-war Southern life complicated the question of who would teach whom. White Southerners resented the intrusion of Yankee teachers in their midst. Yet, as Union General Kidder, stationed in Texas, pointed out, white Texans held "violent prejudices" against Northern teachers and "would not instruct the Negroes themselves, but are willing and anxious to have them taught by their own race."[6] The willingness of whites to teach black children varied enormously in the post-war South. The superintendent of

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[5] First Semi-Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools of the Freedmen's Bureau January 1, 1866, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, (BRFAL), Record Group 105 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, on microfilm).

[6] Letter to John Alvord in Third Semi-Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools, BRFAL, Record Group 105, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, on microfilm), p.152.

freedmen's education in Georgia reported in 1867 that a white woman teaching blacks "as the most available means of support" closed her school after her church friends "refused to recognize or speak to her."[7] Other white women in Georgia "suffered death threats, the loss of friends, and community ostracism."[8]

The poverty of the South after the war drove many whites to teach in black schools. The Freedmen's Bureau Superintendent of Schools for Virginia, Ralza Morse Manly, described white Virginians seeking positions as teachers for black children as "generally women in reduced circumstances or broken down schoolmasters - persons already sufficiently humbled to be willing to earn their necessary bread by teaching colored children." Manly conceded that these teachers, "while not the best" were better than no teachers.[9]

G.L. Eberhart, of Georgia, commented further in 1867 that while early after the war "scarcely any white persons could be found who were willing to 'disgrace' themselves by 'teaching niggers,' as times grew hard and money and bread scarce," applications increased dramatically. Lawyers, physicians, editors, ministers and "all classes of white people" applied for teaching positions. The quality of these letters, Eberhart wrote with disgust, was exceedingly poor. "Not a few", he explained, "appeared to think that anybody can teach niggers."[10]

Report after report confirmed that Southern whites were willing to teach in black schools

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[7]G.L. Eberhart, Superintendent of Schools for Georgia, Third Semi-Annual Report, January 1, 1867, p.135. BRFAL, Record Group 105 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, on microfilm), p.135.

[8]G.L. Eberhart, Superintendent of Schools for Georgia, Third Semi-Annual Report, January 1, 1867, p.135. BRFAL, Record Group 105 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, on microfilm), p.135.

[9]Manly, Monthly Report for Virginia, July 10, 1869 in Reports.

[10]Fourth Semi-Annual Report, July 1, 1867, p.335.

for financial reasons. In many urban centers, blacks fought for the right to teach in the black public schools. Charleston, South Carolina, is the most prominent example of a city which reserved its teaching positions exclusively for whites until World War I.[11]

The origins of a new native black and white Southern teaching force went hand in hand with the rise of new public school systems in the Southern states after the war. Although many Southern states had some systems of common schools before the war none had created formal state supported schools to train teachers, as was the practice in the Northern and Midwestern states.[12] The new commitment to public schools in the post-war Southern states necessitated the training of a new corps of teachers. The state school superintendent of North Carolina captured the renewed emphasis upon training Southern teachers during this transitional era of Reconstruction at the inauguration of the Saint Augustine Normal School in Raleigh, stating "This will inaugurate a new era in the educational work in North Carolina as much it will furnish teachers of home production when those from the North shall foil us."[13]

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[11]Howard N. Rabinowitz, "Half a Loaf: The Shift From White to Black Teachers in the Negro Schools of the Urban South, 1865-1890" Journal of Southern History 40 (Nov. 1974): 565-94; and Mamie Fields, Lemon Swamp and Other Places: A Carolina Memoir (New York: The Free Press, 1983).

[12]For information on the history of teacher training see Gillian E. Cook, "The Practical Training of Teachers in Normal Schools, Colleges, and Universities in the Nineteenth Century" Qualifying Paper, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1975. The only qualified exception is that the City of Charleston, South Carolina, opened in 1858 a normal training school for its public schools. Massachusetts opened the first state-supported normal school in Lexington, Massachusetts in 1839. See Arthur O. Norton, ed. The First State Normal School in America: The Journals of Cyrus Pierce and Mary Swift (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926).

[13]Fourth Semi-Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools of the Freedmen's Bureau BRFAL, p.312.

III. White Women and Teaching: Downward Mobility or Opportunity?

Although black children in the post-war South might encounter either a black or white teacher in their classrooms, white children only experienced white teachers. From where did the schools of the South recruit their teachers? The major shift during this era, we have seen, is the feminization of the white teaching force. The end of the Civil War witnessed the brief entrance of men back into teaching. Veterans, for example, looked to teaching as a source of income. One astute observer of the South's schools noted "Even before the close [of the war] many a one-legged or one-armed veteran commanded the forces in an 'old field school,' and many a crippled soldier boy undertook the drill of the classroom, because disqualified [sic] for the drill of the camp. As teachers they were strict and faithful."[14] This romantic image of the post-war-veteran in the classrooms, although a staple in many private academies, quickly gave way to the entrance of white women into teaching. The supply of white women eligible to teach came from two sources. The first I will discuss is the phenomenon of white women of the so-called "better classes" of Southern white society. The economic hardships of the war era drove many educated women into teaching who previously would not have considered working outside the home.

The social structure of white antebellum society contributed to the uneven educational preparation of its children. The common schools of the South in the 1840s and 1850s, remained, with the exception of the South's few large cities, tainted with the stigma of being charity

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[14]Charles W. Dabney, "Advance of Education in the South" The Cosmpolitan Illustrated Monthly Magazine Vol. XIII, (Sept. 1892), 531.

schools. As a result, middle to upper class parents sent their daughters to private academies, often called "colleges." Among those who could not afford private schools, many girls did not attend school, or at least enough school to achieve literacy in reading and writing. The 1850 census revealed the South's resulting gender disparity in literacy. While in the New England states, only two percent of native white men and women could not read or write, in the South, twenty-four per cent of the women compared to fifteen per cent of the men could not read or write. The dichotomy between the education of the South's wealthier white women versus their poorer white sisters sheds light on the potential pool of women who could teach after the war. For example, in one Southern textile mill town, the daughters of middle-class whites attended school in 1860 at a rate three times greater than what were called the "poor white" daughters of textile mill operatives.[15]

Thus, the pool of young women who were educationally qualified to teach, represented those whose social class debarred them from working outside the home. Whereas in the North, an occupation such as teaching was readily acceptable by the mid-nineteenth century, the sharper divisions of the South's slave society rendered work outside the home for white women a risky affair. Even among white men teaching carried somewhat of a stigma. A teacher in the South described the negative antebellum attitude towards the profession:

> Teaching here is looked upon as a trade, both in males and females. For a Southern lady to teach as a governess, she loses caste with many. I know a lady with two grown daughters who has a school not far from

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[15]Table I, "School Attendance By Race and Class, and Children 6-18, Columbus, Georgia, 1860 and 1873" from Chapter Three of Victoria-María MacDonald, Northern Ideas, Southern Realities: The Transformation of Schooling in a Nineteenth Century Mill Town (1995, manuscript under review).

> Vicksburg, who will not let her daughters assist her in teaching, lest it should be an obstacle in the way of their marrying en regle."[16]

George Fitzhugh, the strident slavery advocate, criticized Southern society's "disposition" to rank teaching among the menial employments, driving away "intelligent Southern men from the profession of teaching." Fitzhugh, by the opening of the Civil War, recommended removing the social stigma against teaching, to rid the South of Yankee teachers, who had "overrun" the South during the antebellum era.[17] The secessional crisis of the late 1850s contributed to the ostracism, and removal of Northern born teachers employed in the South. At the local and regional level, cities, counties, and individual schools resolved not to employ Northern-born teachers or one who "was not a Northerner with Southern principles." One observer astutely noted in 1853 that this measure "will be one benefit to the South. Its youth will prepare themselves to be teachers, and this despised vocation will become honorable."[18]

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[16]The Sunny South, p.270.

[17]George Fitzhugh, "Education of Southern Women," DeBow's Review Vol. 31 (Sept. 1861): 381-90.

[18]The Sunny South, 271-2. At the Southern Commercial Conventions of the 1850s, it was resolved to reduce the "pernicious" influence of Yankee teachers and schools. The proceedings of the conventions are reproduced in DeBow's Review. See, for example, "Proceedings of the Southern Convention, Vicksburg, Mississippi" DeBow's Review Vol. 27 (July 1859): 102-3. An overview of these measures during the 1850s and early 1860s may be found in L. Minerva Turnbull, "The Southern Educational Revolt" William and Mary Quarterly 14 (Jan. 1930): 60-75; John S. Ezell, "A Southern Education for Southrons" Journal of Southern History XVII (1951): 303-27; John McCardell, "Northern Domination in Our Schools and Pulpits" Chapter Five of The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.,1979), 177-226; and William R. Taylor, "Toward a Definition of Orthodoxy: The Patrician South and the

While the secessional crisis began the process of elevating the status of teaching, forcing the South to rely upon its own for teachers, it was the Civil War that opened the teaching profession to the South's white women. Historian Anne Firor Scott, in her broad survey of Southern women, concluded that "half the young women in the post-war South must have taught school at least briefly."[19] The entrance into teaching began during the war. Some white women, such as Kate Virginia Cox Logan, began teaching as a form of recreation. This upper-class Virginian woman in 1863 "conceived the idea of teaching some of the especially clever village children, as there was no school just then. They came to me in the mornings, and I enjoyed spending several hours in this way."[20] Others, of more modest circumstances, relied upon teaching for their daily bread. Madge Brown of Vicksburg, Mississippi, taught in the mornings and sewed at night while her husband was away at war. For her services, she received payment in pumpkins, potatoes, and "other country products."[21]

The literary evidence of the post-war era emphasizes the entrance of middle and upper class white women into the teaching profession. These women had received a solid education in the South's antebellum private academies. However, only those who may have gone North for their education, received any instruction in modern pedagogical methods or classroom management.

Superintendents throughout the South publicly recognized their fortune in staffing the new

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Common Schools" Harvard Educational Review 36 (Fall 1966): 412-426.

[19]Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, footnote 17, p. 112.

[20]Logan, A Confederate Girlhood, p.55.

[21]Frances Butler Simkins and James Patton, The Women of the Confederacy (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1936), 117.

public schools of the South with white women formerly of the South's upper strata. In Richmond, the school superintendent noted, "The exigencies of the times threw into this work a large number of ladies from our most refined and cultivated families - ladies who had received liberal educations, who had enjoyed the thousand refining influences which wealth and cultivated society and travel can give."[22] In Alabama, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia, educators echoed the same theme that the unfortunate "reverses" of the upper classes were "converted into blessings...by furnishing a large number of accomplished teachers."[23]

What is the implication for Southern education that many white women may have entered the classroom as a result of the reverses of the war, rather than the lofty ideals of "true womanhood" and "fitness" in their ability to manage children, particularly younger boys and girls? The diary of one such teacher, Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, sheds light on the relationship between elite Southern women and the profession of teaching. Thomas, the daughter of one of the wealthiest planters and slave-owners in Georgia, was graduated from Wesleyan Female College in Macon, one of the South's few antebellum colleges for women. Her marriage into another elite family provided early financial stability, but little else. By the end of the war, she was thirty years old and had five young children to support. As early as February of 1865

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[22]"Brief Historical Sketch" in Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools, Richmond, Virginia, 1890-91. (Richmond: City Printer, 1891).

[23]See, for example, "Thirteenth Annual Report of the General Agent, Barnas Sears," (October 1879), Vol. II Proceedings of the Peabody Fund, 211; William H. Ruffner, First Annual Report of the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction (Richmond: C.A. Schaffter, Supt. Public Printing, 1871), 14; Amory Dwight Mayo, Southern Women in the Recent Educational Movement, (1892), 128, 150-51, and 169; and Testimony of H.C. Armstrong, Superintendent of Alabama Schools, in U.S. Senate, Relations Between Labor and Capital (Washington, D.C.: 1885), Vol. IV, p.203.

she wrote, "I have seen poverty staring me in the face when I expected Sherman in August and our planting interest was destroyed and God knows there was nothing attractive in the gaunt picture presented...I looked forward and asked myself, what can I do? Nothing, except teach school."[24] Her husband, although not working himself, initially forbid her from the public disgrace of teaching. Her neighbors also expressed doubt as to her ability to maintain a school. One gentlemen neighbor opined, "I know Mrs. Thomas will not continue the school. She wasn't raised to work and she will grow tired of it very soon." Thomas persisted, however, and found pleasure in earning her thirty-dollar monthly salary "to work for my children and thus procure them the clothing which they require."[25]

Once in the classroom, Thomas displayed a genuine interest in her pupils, but found the work tiring. During summer vacation she confessed to her diary, "There has been no day during the time I have stopped teaching when the thought of beginning again was not extremely distasteful to me." [6 August 1880]. Her education and ambitions caused her to question her opportunities in the limited sphere available to Southern women, "I can do better work I thought than teaching little children their alphabet and taxing my nerves to hear reading lessons in 1st and 2d readers." [2 September 1880].

Ella Thomas's experiences and attitude toward teaching was not unique to women of her class in the post-war years.[26] Elite women in teaching represented a phenomenon unique to the

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[24]Entry of 12 February 1865, The Secret Eye: The Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 258.

[25]Entry of 7 May 1879, The Secret Eye, 382-3.

[26]George C. Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 129-30 and Mary Massey, Chapter Six, "A Female Teacher Will Do" in Bonnet Brigades, 109.

South's economic collapse. A second source of teachers arose from what contemporaries called the "middling ranks" of white society. As early as the 1850s, Calvin Wiley, superintendent of schools for North Carolina, actively encouraged the recruitment and training of poorer white women in the state to become teachers. "One female," Wiley stated, "emerging from the humblest walks of society to high social position, and earning a good living in employments more congenial to woman's physical and moral constitution, than labor in the fields, is a standing practical and widely influential lesson to open the eyes of the masses, especially of the poor, to the importance of common schools."[27] Repeatedly, Wiley advocated the hiring of woman, as a benefit to the "poor" women themselves and as a measure to promote the success of the new common school system of the state. Despite Wiley's campaign to encourage women teachers, by 1859, only ten per cent of the more than two thousand licensed teachers of North Carolina were women (214 of 2,042).[28]

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[27]Calvin Wiley, Second Annual Report of the General Superintendent of Common Schools (Raleigh: W.W. Holden, Printer, 1855), 37.

[28]"Table I" "Fifth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools" to the Governor, Thomas Bragg, Document No.9, n.p. in Documents: Executive and Legislative: Session 1858-9 (Raleigh: Holden and Wilson), and pages 36-7. For more references to women teachers, see for example, Wiley's First Annual Report in which he states as a goal, "Encourage as much as possible the very poor, and especially poor females, to become teachers." (Raleigh, 1854), 44-46; Second Annual Report of the General Superintendent of Common Schools (Raleigh: W.W. Holden, Printer, 1855), 37-8. In Wiley's "Letter to Examiners" dated May 1860, he advises that "There is a sound propriety in licensing as many females as possible; for while these latter will not attempt to deceive the public as to their qualifications, and will generally do more thoroughly than males what they undertake to do, they are more likely to improve, they constitute so many advocates of summer schools, and thus aid in practically establishing a graded system." Document No. 10, Eighth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools (Raleigh: John Spelman, Printer, 1861), 33.

The post-war years witnessed the concerted effort of educators and philanthropists, particularly the Peabody Educational Fund, to create normal schools and teacher training institutes. Although both men and women were encouraged to receive a free education at public institutions throughout the South in exchange for a pledge to teach in the public schools for one or two years, the shift from men to women among whites occurred rapidly. As early as 1873, the superintendent of public schools in Washington, D.C. observed, "The female teachers of the Public Schools of this city now constitute ninety-five per cent of the entire corps; and the demand for male teachers is, therefore, so slight that no necessity exists for any provision for their education in the Normal Schools."[29]

Racial competition increased the urgency among white educators to train white teachers. The Freedmen's Bureau and various Northern philanthropic organizations which had arrived in the South during Reconstruction, quickly regarded teacher training as their primary goal. In 1881, Amory Dwight Mayo, one of the keener observers on post-war Southern schooling concluded that "the arrangements for the normal training of Southern white teachers are at present far below the opportunities for the Negroes. There are not a half dozen genuine normal or training schools for white teachers in the whole South. The mass of these teachers are graduates of public, academical, or collegiate establishments, often taught by obsolete methods and not pretending to deal with didactics as a distinct science and art."[30] William Ruffner, superintendent of Virginia's schools concurred, writing in 1874, "It is high time that something

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[29]Twenty-Sixth Report of the Public Schools of the City of Washington ,(Washington City, 1873), 35.

[30]A.D. Mayo, "The South at School" An Address Delivered Before the American Institute of Instruction at St. Albans, Vermont, July 6, 1881. in Southern Women (1892), 222-3.

were done by the state for her army of white teachers." At that time, black men and women in Virginia, Ruffner observed, could receive normal training at Hampton, the Richmond Normal School, "conducted in a twenty thousand dollar building" and a second private colored normal school.[31]

The pool of white women after the war who entered teaching thus either came from the more affluent classes, educated, but lacking in any special training for the classroom. The younger white women of the South who entered teaching began their teacher training in the hastily created teachers institutes, held during vacations, or weekly "normal" classes required of many public schools teachers, particularly in the urban South. Normal schools and the normal departments of various universities and colleges slowly prepared the new generation of Southern teachers.[32]

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[31]William H. Ruffner, Fourth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Virginia (Richmond: R.F. Walker, Printer, 1875), 134-5.

[32]Southern states offered free tuition to students in higher educational institutions who would pledge one or two years of teaching in the public schools after matriculation. See examples in Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools of Richmond, Virginia, (Richmond, State Printer, 1892), 50-51. Of vital importance to understanding the development of teacher training in the Southern states if the role of the Peabody Educational Fund. This fund provided money for teacher training institutes for black and white teachers, normal schools, and the Nashville Normal College (later Vanderbilt), during a period when most Southern states could barely afford funds for primary schooling, much less normal training. See Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund, 6 Vols. (Boston: Press of John Wilson & Son, 1870s-1880s). See also, J.L.M. Curry, A Brief Sketch of George Peabody and A History of the Peabody Education Fund Through Thirty Years (1898: New York: Negro University Press, 1969 reprint).

IV. More Than a Job: Black Women and Teaching

What do Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and Horace Mann Bond have in common with almost two-thirds of the Southern black teachers of 1880? These educators and leaders shared a heritage of mixed race. In our 1880 sample of Southern teachers, the census taker identified sixty per cent (60%) as mulatto. By 1910, this percentage had dropped to fifty-one per cent (51%). Nationally, the mulatto population was fifteen per cent in 1880 and twenty per cent in 1910. [The identification of "mulatto" was a category left to the discretion of the census taker, who mostly likely included a broad spectrum of mixed race individuals.]

In this discussion of Southern black teachers, the striking presence of so many teachers of mixed race takes center stage. As Southern society evolved after the war, one of the biggest challenges it faced was the education of its formerly enslaved population. Forbidden by state laws to learn how to read and write, historians estimate that between five and ten per cent of the slave population had acquired some literacy. The small free black population of the South exhibited higher rates of literacy.[33] Although we have seen that Northern white missionary teachers and Southern whites taught black children in the first decades after the war, eventually in the broader Southern landscape, with a few exceptions, black teachers taught black children. The rise of this corps of teachers follows a distinctly different path than that of white women.

The overarching theme in the literature of black women's history is the unique

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[33]Janet Duitsman Cornelius, When I Can Read My Title Clear: Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South (University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

commitment to racial uplift which black women demonstrated, particularly as teachers. This letter from a young black female teacher in Powhatan County, Virginia, captures the mixture of dedication and practicality which teaching represented in the life of post-war black women, "I have been teaching some months, and have not got my pay yet; that troubles me; still, it does not make me lose my interest in teaching. As you know, I am a poor girl, and need my earnings. I came here to teach my people, and really I do think more of that than my pay, although I did want to pay my sister's schooling, and not depend on our old father."[34] The knowledge that not only did black teachers devote themselves to their communities in more ways than simply time in the classroom, but were also overwhelmingly mulatto - illuminates the connection between black leadership and education in the post-war period, a subject which has received little treatment from educational historians.

While the white woman teacher was viewed by some as losing caste by entering the classroom, black women and work in the South had a different legacy. Slavery touched both men and women, and although historians have noted that many black families attempted to keep

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[34]"Letters from Hampton graduates were often reprinted in the annual reports. Annual Report of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, for the Year Ending June 1882, 4. The theme of racial uplift and teaching is explored in Lucy D. Slower, "Higher Education of Negro Women" Journal of Negro Education Vol. II (July 1933: 352-358; Linda M. Perkins, "The Impact of the 'Cult of True Womanhood" on the Education of Black Women" Journal of Social Issues Vol. 39 (1983) No.3: 17-28; Lucy C. Laney, "The Burden of the Educated Colored Woman" Southern Workman (Sept. 1899): 341-345; Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925 (knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1989); Sharon Harley, "Beyond the Classroom: The Organizational Lives of Black Female Educators in the District of Columbus, 1890-1930" Journal of Negro Education Vol. 51 (1982): 254-265; and Linda Gordon, "Black and White Visions of Welfare: Women's Welfare Activism, 1890-1945" Journal of American History (September 1991): 559-590.

mothers at home after emancipation, black women, married and unmarried, have always worked outside of the home at higher rates than their white counterparts.[35] The entrance of black women into teaching, rather than downward mobility, represented a position of status and leadership in the black community. Charlotte Stephens, the first black teacher in Little Rock, Arkansas, recalled during Reconstruction, "At that period of general ignorance, a teacher was regarded by his patrons as a paragon of wisdom, capable of performing any intellectual feat."[36] Black women entered more slowly into the teaching profession than their white counterparts, however,

Racism and sexism combined to narrow the potential pool of black women suited for teaching. The limited number of professions open to black men in the late nineteenth century contributed to a slow exit of men from teaching. Next to the ministry, teaching represented one of the few opportunities for educated black men.[37] By 1910, however, the proportion of black women teaching equalled that of white women.

The rate of educational participation among black girls during the Reconstruction period and before also influenced the available supply of black teachers. In two case studies of counties in

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[35]Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1985); and Claudia Goldin, "Female Labor Force Participation: The Origin of Black and White Differences, 1870 and 1880" Journal of Economic History, Vol. XXXVII (March 1971): 87-112.

[36]Adolphine Fletcher Terry, Charlotte Stephens: Little Rock's First Black Teacher (Little Rock, AK: Academic Press of Arkansas, 1973), 99-100.

[37]Bettye Collier Thomas, "The Impact of Black Women in Education: An Historical Overview" Journal of Negro Education Vol. 51 (1982), 175.

North Carolina and one urban center in Georgia, the free black populations of 1860 exhibited higher literacy rates among its male versus female members.[38] Although schooling during the Reconstruction period has, in some ways, been studied intensively, the gender of the pupils in the Reconstruction schools, those who would have been the first to receive an education, has not been examined separately.

The relative youthfulness of the black female teachers, five-sixths were under the age of thirty in 1880, suggests that they profited from the new schools available after emancipation. In Charleston, South Carolina, a student remembered that the first generation of black teachers had "gone to the public schools in the days following the ending of the Civil War. Although they were free issues, as they called themselves, as children going to school they would hid their books in market baskets until they got to the schoolhouse for fear they might be turned backed it if were known that they were going to school. The woman who conducted the school I attended had gone to one of these early public schools, but the younger had been graduated from Avery [Institute], which was conducted by women sent down as missionaries under the sponsorship of certain northern churches." [39] The emphasis placed upon teacher training for blacks during the Reconstruction era, resulted in over one hundred institutions in the South offering some form of "normal training" for blacks by 1881.[40] At Hampton Normal and

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[38]Keith Whitescarver, "Political Economy, Schooling, and Literacy in the South: A Comparison of Plantation and Yeoman Communities in North Carolina, 1850-1910" Dissertation in progress, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1995; and Victoria-Maria MacDonald, Northern Ideas and Southern Realities: The Transformation of Schooling in a Nineteenth Century Mill Town (1995, manuscript under review).

[39]Septima Clarke, Echo in My Soul, 17.

[40]Mayo, "The South At School" in Southern Women (1892), 222-3.

Agricultural Institute in Virginia, the principal argued in 1879 that "the education of colored girls is as important as that of the men. They are received into the higher freedman's schools of the South, but are always, I think, in less numbers than the young men, being in proportion to the latter about as one to two...Parents prefer to make sacrifices for their sons...There is not much to make girls ambitious. He concluded that "special encouragement should be given to increase their numbers" because communities were finding that "Not being tempted to enter politics, they are, in some counties in Virginia, growing in favor as teachers, at the expense of young men."[41] Once having entered the segregated classrooms of the South, these young women, confronted difficulties not only from the white race, but from their own race as well.

At the State Colored Normal School in Fayetteville, North Carolina, political divisions among blacks scared away prospective students. Principal Robert Harris reported in 1879, "In some cases, students, who wished to enter the school, have been warned of positive bodily injury to compel them to become Democrats" and been told that the school is a "nursery for colored Democrats."[42]

Class divisions and divisions based upon skin color also affected the educational opportunities of black pupils in the post-war era. An upper class mulatto teacher in Charleston, "selected" her pupils. According to a former student, "She didn't take just anybody who had the money for tuition. She chose her pupils from the Negroes who boasted of being free issues;

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[41]H.C. Armstrong, The Annual Report of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute Year Ending 1879, 6-7.

[42]Robert Harris, "Report of the Principal of the State Colored Normal School for the School Year 1878-79" in Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina for 1879 (Raleigh: State Printers, 1880), 36.

these people constituted a sort of upper caste. But our teacher required that we act in a manner befitting our superior positions."[43]

Racial discrimination distinguished the lived experience of black women teachers versus white teachers. The numerous daily instances of disrespect and humiliation, in addition to glaring salary inequities between black and white teachers, shaped the black teacher's life. For example, a young Hampton graduate wrote in 1883 from Virginia, "When I first commenced to teach, some of the grown white girls, who go to school, used to try and push me off the sidewalk. I always got off for them, because I did not think it looked well for a teacher to be wrestling over the sidewalk, but had I been a school-girl I think I should have done some pushing too...those girls were only poor white girls.""In Savannah, teacher Mrs. John T. Denman was arrested and subsequently jailed at a city fair in 1868 for complaining loudly that the white police were "too fond of pushing colored people, and that if she was a man she would resist it." This particular teacher possessed the resources to hire a white lawyer to dispute the jailing and fine imposed, but many black teachers simply lost their position if they crossed the delicate line of Southern racial codes.[45] A Spelman Seminary graduate found herself out of a job in the black public schools of Columbus, Georgia after requesting that a school board member call her by her titled name, "Miss Ida Brown" rather than the white Southern custom

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[43]Clarke, Echo in My Soul, 18.

[44]Letter excerpted in Annual Report of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute for the Year Ending June 1883, 6-7.

[45]Edmund L. Drago, "Militancy and Black Women in Reconstruction Georgia" Journal of American Culture, 838-844.

of calling black women by their first names.[46]

Not only were the contours of daily life different than white teachers, but teaching was more likely to remain a lifelong profession for black women. In 1880, only two per cent of Southern women taught who were married compared to thirteen per cent (18%) of black teachers. By 1910, almost one-quarter of black women teachers were combining teaching and marriage, while the rate for Southern white women remained the same -- two per cent.[47]

To return to my first point about black teachers, that nearly two-thirds were of mixed race in the late nineteenth century, I would like to speculate further (and this is still in the exploratory stage) on the relationship between education, educators, and racial mixing, a topic which educational historians have largely ignored, particularly concerning women. During the early part of this century sociologists displayed considerable interest in the topic of race and race mixing. In 1918, two important books were published on this subject. The U.S. Census Bureau completed its comprehensive volume, The Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1918. In this work it was estimated that in 1910 three-quarters of blacks in the U.S. were of mixed blood, although only 21% were officially counted as mulattoes in the "visibility" test of the

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[46]Victoria MacDonald Huntzinger, "The Intersection of Three Worlds: The Social Origins of Black Women Teachers in Columbus, Georgia" Unpublished paper, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1992. See also Mamie Fields' discussion of this point in Lemon Swamp and Other Places, A Carolina Memoir (New York: Free Press, 1983).

[47]Septima Clarke, a black teacher from South Carolina, opined, "The white teachers, particularly the women, tend to get married and leave the profession after fewer years of teaching than do the Negro teachers. That is the explanation. Negroes, I believe, consider teaching more important as a profession than do the majority of the white women teaching; many of the latter, I think, consider it more a way of making a living while they are on the lookout for husbands. Negro teachers, even when they get married, are likely to continue teaching." Echo In My Soul, 40.

census taker.[48] The second book by University of Chicago's sociologist Edward Reuter, was entitled The Mulatto in the United States: Including a Study of the Role of Mixed-Blood Races Throughout the World. Reuter argued in his study that 3,820 of 4,267 blacks who had, in his definition, "made any marked success in life" were mulattoes. Reuter's line of reasoning stemmed from a perspective that white blood encouraged an ambition and desire to participate more fully in the white world.[49] I argue, more in accordance with Gunnar Myrdal in The American Dilemma who pointed out that individuals of mixed race possessed a "head start" historically which accounted for their disproportionately high rates of literacy, education, and achievement.[50] The first generation of Southern black teachers, were not, in my opinion, the first generation of mulattoes, but second or third generation. For example, as I began to trace black students attending the North Carolina State Normal School in Fayetteville to their hometowns in the census records for 1880, the broader portrait of an elite racial and economic class which most likely had its start before emancipation was quickly confirmed. Normal school student Martha Ocletree, for instance, was the eighteen year old daughter of a saddler. Her mother was able to stay home without working outside of the home, and both parents, as well as her elder sister could read and write. The census taker described the entire family, both generations, as mulatto. The one telling indication of white blood is not found among Martha's

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[48]U.S. Bureau of the Census, The Negro Population in the U.S. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), I, 209.

[49]Joel Williamson, New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States (New York: The Free Press, 1980), 129-30.

[50]Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (New York: Harper & Row, 1944, 1962), 696-699.

parents, but her grandmother who was noted as born in Ireland.[51] Thus far, as I trace the pupils of the Normal School to their hometowns, the emerging potrait is a mulatto, literate, urban, and the daughters of skilled or entrepreneurial mulattos. In the larger regional census sample, mulatto teachers were also concentrated in the urban areas in both 1880 and 1910. In the only recent book length study of mulattoes, Joel Williamson's New People (1980), his historical analysis also confirms the conclusions I draw regarding the mixed race of Southern teachers.[52] The free black population of the South was disproportionately (three-quarters) mulatto. This class formed an educated and urban elite. At the time of emancipation, those who possessed any form of literacy taught and subsequently trained more black teachers. Mary Gayle, for example, a free black literate mulatto of Columbus, Georgia in 1860, was hired in the missionary schools to teach during Reconstruction. She was subsequently hired by the new black public schools in 1873 despite her marriage to the sexton of the city's colored cemetery.

V. Implications for Southern Educational History

My research and thinking on the relationship between teachers, race, and gender and its implications for the history of Southern education are still in the formative stages. By 1910, three-quarters of the Southern teaching force, black and white, were women. As we delve

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[51]"Report of the Principal, E.E. Smith, of the Fayetteville (Col'd) Normal School, 1884 in Biennial Report of the Supt. of Public Instruction of North Carolina for the Scholastic Years 1883-1884 (Raleigh: State Printers, 1885), 168-174; and U.S. Census, Cumberland County, North Carolina, 1880 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, on microfilm).

[52]New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the U.S. (New York: The Free Press, 1980).

further into who these women were, and what role teaching played in their distinct lives, we can open a window into Southern schools. For example, white women, in the literary records, may have expressed less dedication to their teaching than black women. However, their experiences were extremely different. We know, for example, that more Southern white women dropped out of teaching to marry, shaping, perhaps, a less long-term commitment to teaching as a lifelong profession. By 1910, the black teaching population in the South was still only one-quarter of the entire Southern teaching force, yet the black student population was considerably greater. Black teachers labored under greater teaching loads, with less resources or pay. The ideal of service and racial uplift aided black women in facing the difficulties of teaching in the segregated and unequal classrooms of the South. The entrance of elite Southern white women into teaching represented an unusual phenomena in educational history. We now need to learn more about the large number of women referred to in school reports as younger women from the "middling ranks" who were rapidly replacing the old members of the "aristocratic" classes. These white women quickly formed the majority of Southern schoolteachers, but their education and training, is one of the many areas of Southern schooling which remain underexplored and worthy of further investigation. Southern educators in the late nineteenth century emphasized that white students required more instruction in the methods of teaching versus the content, while black normal students required the opposite. As a result, how did the curriculum at black and white teacher training schools differ? These questions and many remain the subject of further inquiry.

I began this talk with a question posed at the beginning of the century, "Who Will Teach the Black - and White Babies?" I hope that I have, in some ways answered that question, although as with much inquiry, the more questions we ask, the more we create.